

God uses knowledge, God uses ignorance,
God on his birthday had a need of you. Michael Hewlett TiS 281; AHB 214

*And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen
his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.
John 1: 14*

Loving God, we ask that you empower our members in Brazil as
they serve their communities and as they, with us, observe the
season of Advent.

SUNDAY 23 DECEMBER 2018

Christmas

Sing all creation, made for his purposes,
Called by his providence to live and move:
None is unwanted, none insignificant,
Love needs a universe of folk to love.
Close friends and strangers, ethnic minorities,
Old folk and young folk and families too,
God on his birthday, and to eternity,
God took upon himself the need of you. Michael Hewlett TiS 281; AHB 214

*And we have seen, and do testify that the Father has sent his Son as
the Saviour of the world. God abides in those who confess that Jesus
is the Son of God, and they abide in God. So we have known and
believe the love that God has for us. 1 John 4: 14-16*

Let us thank Mary and Joseph for their faith and courage in bringing
to birth our Blessed Saviour. May faith and courage be for all
Mothers' Union members throughout the world the mark of their
love and commitment to God incarnate in the Holy Child.

SUNDAY 30 DECEMBER 2018

Time to pause

Be near me, Lord Jesus, I ask Thee to stay
Close by me forever, and love me I pray
Bless all the dear children, in Thy tender care
And fit us for heaven, to live with Thee there

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK FROM ANGLICAN MOTHERS UNION AUSTRALIA



SUNDAY 30 SEPTEMBER 2018

Respect for the Elderly

In many cultures in our time the elderly have a use by date. If our
existence depended on being able to dig the soil for planting
vegetables or carrying water long distances, I am sure most of you
reading this now would not pass muster. How radical are these
words of scripture! In a culture dependent on the young and
healthy, the value God puts on all human life, regardless of their
worth in the community, is inscribed in the Law of Moses.

*You shall rise before the aged; and defer to the old: and you shall
fear your God: I am the Lord. Leviticus 19: 32*

Mothers' Union members in Rwanda work for those who are
disadvantaged, women and girls. Spiritual and financial
empowerment is a priority and members have regard their own
Christian development meeting weekly for prayer, study and
mutual support. The Anglican Church in Rwanda has a vision to
make all churches early childhood centres. We thank God for this
vision.

SUNDAY 7 OCTOBER 2018

Worship

God is the centre of attention in any act of worship. And Jesus taught that any act of love is an act of worship. The true service (worship) of God is obedient love to him, together with loving service to one's neighbour as God's child. See Luke 10:25ff.

Worship may satisfy our longings, or not. God, however, is satisfied with every humble act of devotion.

Ascribe to the Lord, O families of the peoples, ascribe to the Lord glory and strength. Ascribe to the Lord the glory due to his name; bring an offering and come before him. Worship the Lord in holy splendour. 1 Chronicles 16: 28-29

Worshipful service is the objective of Mothers' Union members in Sri Lanka. A hot cup of tea offered to parents and children coming to the main children's hospital is a humble act full of grace and truth. It fulfils their desire to bring life to the church and to care about communities. Following the way of Jesus brings spiritual enrichment and holy splendour.

SUNDAY 14 OCTOBER 2018

Wealth and poverty

We often make ourselves feel more comfortable, here in Australia, by concentrating on the relativity of our wealth and their poverty. It is certainly a challenge to face our own poverty. Are we poor in spirit? Do we have a generous heart, not just with our money, but with our time and most importantly with our sympathy? Are our offerings heart-driven in the way of God's generosity to us?

In any and all circumstances I have learned the secret of being well-fed and of going hungry, of having plenty and being in need. I can do all things through him who strengthens me. Philippians 4: 12-13

Mothers' Union in Iraq is poor in numbers, the remnant have sought the riches of celebratory worship at Christmas and New Year. They face the poverty of those with disabilities and those living in poverty by offering their service of love with visiting.



days and at that time I will cause a righteous branch to spring up for David; and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land.

Jeremiah 33: 14-15

Members in Vanuatu are very strong in prayer, so that God is with them while they are deeply involved in community outreach. They also help communities plan for climate change disasters and support those affected by cyclones. They train Sunday School teachers so children can be brought up rooted in faith. Let us praise the Lord for the faith of our sisters.

SUNDAY 9 DECEMBER 2018

Waiting

Splendour of Rome and local authority,

Working on policy with furrowed head,

Joined to locate Messiah's nativity,

Just where the prophets had already said.

Sing all you tax-men, dance the commissioners,

Sing civil servants and police men too,

God in his purposes uses the governments

God on his birthday had a need of you. Michael Hewlett TiS 281; AHB 214

I wait for the Lord, my soul waits, and in his word I hope; my soul waits for the Lord more than those who watch for the morning, more than those who watch for the morning. Psalm 130: 5-6

In the Solomon Islands Mothers' Union runs outreach and empowerment programmes for women. As they wait on the working of the Holy Spirit in the lives of those they care for, prayer is central. They with us are waiting and praying during this Advent season, preparing for the Coming of the Messiah.

SUNDAY 16 DECEMBER 2018

Advent glory

Wise men they called them, earnest astrologers,

Watching for meaning in the moving stars,

Science or fantasy, learned or laughable,

Theirs was a vision that was brought to pass.

Sing all you wise men, dance all the scientists,

Whether your theories are false or true,



orphans and single mothers, working to abolish discrimination and rebuilding lives. One woman said that its adult literacy programme and other work 'has been an eye opener for me ... the training has helped me strongly in my work'. God is good.

SUNDAY 25 NOVEMBER 2018

A heart for justice

A perpetrator is sentenced and the victim is to have 'justice'. Holy Scripture has a very different notion of Justice. It is relational rather than forensic, forgiveness rather than retribution. The deepest insight of the Old Testament and the real truth underlying the Letter to the Romans is that God is always seeking to restore the sinner to goodness. God grant us the humility to see our own heart` and understanding of the weaknesses of others that we may truly learn to be good and seek after righteousness.

Learn to do good, seek justice, rescue the oppressed, defend the orphan, plead for the widow. Isaiah 1:17

In Guinea the distribution of wealth and natural resources is unequal yet members of Mothers' Union work to bring the Lord's justice to those in need. Prisoners depend on their gifts of food and clothing for survival and are sustained by their visits and prayers.

Members support priests and their families, the sick and the congregational families and in so doing strive in the way of righteousness.

SUNDAY 2 DECEMBER 2018

Advent

When God Almighty came to be one of us,
Masking the glory of his golden train,
Millions of plain things kindled by accident
And they will never be the same again.

Sing all you midwives, dance all the carpenters,
Sing all the publicans and shepherds too,
God in his mercy uses the commonplace,
God on his birthday had a need of you.

Michael Hewlett TIS 281; AHB 214

The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will fulfil the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah. In those



We thank God for the work of members in South Korea who minister to those in prison, who experience the wealth of their loving concern in the poverty of their isolation and confinement.

SUNDAY 21 OCTOBER 2018

Journeying

*One more step along the world I go,
One more step along the world I go,
From the old things to the new,
Keep me travelling along with you.
And it's from the old I travel to the new.
Keep me travelling along with you.*

Sydney Carter's jaunty hymn picks up the notion of the Way along which Jesus took his disciples and on which we are called to journey. , [In *All Together* no 200; *Common Praise* 548.]

But the path of the righteous is like the light of dawn, which shines brighter and brighter until full day. Proverbs 4: 18

In Zimbabwe and Malawi Mothers' Union members journey alongside their sisters. They are helping Mrs Moyo, a disabled single mum, so she can send her children to school. Education is very important in Zimbabwe, and with members' help school fees and blankets for orphans, children and parents can journey forward with confidence and faith in the future. In Malawi Mothers' Union travels in Jesus' steps helping to develop healthy communities and families.

SUNDAY 28 OCTOBER 2018

People of God

When we gather for worship, man the trading table, participate in community events we do so as a family, a human family. This experience is intensified at certain times and places, 'When we partake of God's in-dwelling in the Eucharistic elements' for example, or read the Bible, or sing and pray together, we do so as a family, a communion. We are 'a continuum of people in relationship to one another and to God. Even our traditionalism is simply an extension of this relational principle to our co-believers of past and future'. *The Poetic Imagination: An Anglican Spiritual Tradition* by William Countryman.



But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light. 1 Peter 2: 9

The concept of the people of God motivates members in Mozambique as they treat those in their communities with love and respect. In the diocese of Lebombo prisoners are visited regularly. Sharing prayer, gifts and food, our sisters show their love of God's people and follow Jesus' command to nurture those on the fringes of society, bringing them the light of Christ.

SUNDAY 4 NOVEMBER 2018

Health and healing

Jesus is both our Saviour and our Healer. What does this mean in today's world where glowing fitness and longevity as seen as achievements and disability and premature death the result of mismanagement? We are Christ's – body, mind and soul – and each component requires our attention, care and faith. Save us Lord while we are awake to the temptations of sin; protect us from unconscious straying away that success or failure may bring about. In you, O Lord, we trust.

Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and curing every disease and every sickness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Matthew 9: 35-36

Health and healing is an ever-present issue for members in Sudan. In danger, as a minority 1.5% of the overall population, Mother's Union members know only too well Jesus as Saviour and Healer. The paradox of faith in adversity is very evident here. At the inauguration of Sudan as a Province, Archbishop Justin Welby described Mothers' Union as 'the heart and love of the Church'. Health and Healing CAN thrive in difficult, even impossible, situations. Thanks be to God.

SUNDAY 11 NOVEMBER 2018

Memories

Memories are our own personal history. They can be powerful agents in how we grow our faith and our wellbeing. Let us then call to mind the good and best memories and fervently thank God for them. Let snatches of hymns, prayers, or lines from a sermon or a novel strengthen our memories of God's good grace. As we fill our hearts and minds we build up spiritual strength with which to deal with negative notions: I won't ever forget I will never be able to forgive. Remember you are a loved child of God.

I will call to mind the deeds of the Lord; I will remember your wonders of old. I will meditate on all your work, and muse on your mighty deeds. Psalm 77: 11-12

Healing memory with loving care and raising awareness is an outcome of the key part of Mothers' Union in Namibia. By confronting the stigma of TB and HIV-Aids members help sufferers and others to seek treatment. They assist in healing the memory of gender-based violence by campaigning against it and running self-support and home-based care groups. Bless the Lord for those who remember Jesus' love of the afflicted and do his work.

SUNDAY 18 NOVEMBER 2018

Generosity

Is the opposite of generosity fear? Fear of being destitute, fear of rejection, of any sign of failure? Was it family culture that taught us to watch the pennies even when the coffers are overflowing? Is it fear that warns us to always hold back from giving too much of ourselves away. Generosity grows in us as we ponder more and more the generosity of God, Creator, Redeemer and Sanctifier.

The point is this: the one who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and the one who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. 1 Corinthians 9: 6-7

The effects of Ebola infection still impact lives in Sierra Leone. With generosity of spirit Mothers' Union has ministered to those left

